but for raw material for munitions, and for the essentials of life of the civil population as well."

There was a serious shortage of shipping for the pressing needs of the Allies. Essential drafts for Allied Armies in Salonika, Egypt and Mesopotamia were held up because there was no transport available. Railway material which was urgently required behind the line in France could not be taken across for lack of ships. Ammunition for some of our armies had to be cut down (although ships had to be found to transport forage for the Cavalry Divisions that were always fit and ready to complete the great rout that was for ever impending on the Western Front). Our food supplies could not be replenished for the same reason. The position in all these respects was precarious. Italy was in dire need of coal for her munition works, but the deliveries were 800,000 tons short of her requirements because we had no available ships to carry the fuel. Italy's already inadequate supply of ammunition was thus still further diminished for lack of British shipping. The submarine attack on our shipping had inflicted serious losses during the last few months. The new submarine monster was gliding everywhere through the deep in search of prey—defenceless prey. Allied ships were being stricken down in increasing numbers. We seemed impotent to protect our ships and their devoted

Growing of vessels

mariners.

Since the beginning of August, some 675,000 tons of British shipping had been sent to the bottom of the sea. On the other hand, we were making no real effort to build new vessels and the output of our yards had decreased by 66 per cent. The shortage was not altogether due to the lack of tonnage, but was largely attributable to the fact that the use we made